

VZCZCXRO4252
RR RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHBD #0258/01 3030610
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 300610Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4686
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000258

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS/COPPOLAMG, CA/OCS/PROCTORL

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [BX](#)

SUBJECT: BRUNEI'S PRISONS: CURRENT CONDITIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

SUMMARY

1.(SBU) On October 28, 2009, DCM and POL Assistant visited Brunei's newest prison facility - Maraburong Prison. Deputy Director Abdul Manan Hj Abdul Rahman, along with his senior staff, lead a tour and answered questions about Brunei's penal system. While conditions in the prison are good, a third of inmates have undergone canning. The most common offences are drug-related, followed by immigration violations. The death penalty has not been carried out since 1996. About one third of the inmates are foreigners and there has never been an American prisoner. Brunei's penal system is primarily focused on rehabilitation. Reintegration of prisoners into society is a significant issue. The department is planning to centralize all prisoners in the Maraburong complex and is undergoing a three phase construction project with a total capacity of 1000 prisoners, far exceeding the current population of almost 400. Prison officials would like to have immigration offenders housed in separate facility. Currently, there is no juvenile detention facility. Prison officials expressed interest in learning more about the U.S. prison system, with a focus on prison industries and the parole system. Embassy would like to facilitate visits and welcomes Department support. End Summary.

BRUNEI'S PRISON SYSTEM: DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

2.(SBU) There are a total of 386 inmates in the entire Brunei penal system. Of this total, 372 are convicted prisoners and 14 are on remand awaiting trial. About 30 percent of the inmate population is foreign. Indonesians, followed by Malaysians and Filipinos, are the largest group of foreign inmates. There has never been an American prisoner, according to officials. There are about 40 women inmates who are housed at the Jerudong prison facility. The largest percentages of inmates are incarcerated for drug-related offences. Those serving for immigration offences make up the next largest group of prisoners. Prison officials stated they see a growing trend amongst those convicted for drug offenses. More inmates are being convicted for trafficking and using methamphetamine. In addition, male inmates convicted for sexual offences are also on the rise.

DEATH PENALTY, CANNING, AND PAROLE

3.(SBU) The last death sentence occurred in 1996. Today, offenders on death row can appeal their sentences to His Majesty and the current trend is for the sentence to be commuted to a life sentence. However, less than five percent of inmates on life sentences are commuted for release. A total number of 184 inmates have undergone corporal punishment - canning- between 2008 till October 2009. The most common offenses that carry the canning penalty are: Drug offences, immigration violations, prostitution, and violent crimes. Brunei's penal system does not have parole but it does have a remittance system where a third of the sentence is automatically reduced if prisoner maintains good behavior while incarcerated.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES:

4.(SBU) Brunei's prison department currently has two correctional facilities - the Jerudong Prison that accommodates the serious offenders and women inmates (separately), and the Maraburong prison which houses minimum to medium security offenders. There is an almost one to one ratio of guard to prisoners with a total of 133 prison staffs including wardens and civil officers at Maraburong. Brunei has a "docile" prison population according to Deputy Director, Abdul Manan, who stated there have been no riots in Brunei's prisons in the past 30 years. The department previously operated the drug rehabilitation center, but handed over the facility to the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in February 2008. Both prison facilities have permanent resident medical officers who are provided by the Ministry of Health.

FOCUS ON REHABILITATION

15. (SBU) Brunei's prisons are primarily focused on rehabilitation programs with a mission to "protect and rehabilitate efficiently". Rehabilitation, in the form of religious education for Islamic prisoners, is conducted by officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. According to Superintendent Isamuddin Juna, as part of their social/religious rehabilitation, the prison also provides for "religious freedom" by observing religious holidays for inmates of different religions. For secondary education, inmates are given the opportunity to retake various school examinations as most inmates are unemployed school drop-outs. (NOTE: Brunei's education system is modeled after the British "A" and "O" level system. End Note) Vocational training, in woodworking and agricultural skills, is the primary job training provided. The woodworking products are of commercial quality but the prison has had difficulty setting up commercial ventures to market and sell their products throughout Brunei. Inmates receive daily salaries but are not compensated

BANDAR SER 00000258 002 OF 002

directly from product sales. Prison officials noted their interest in learning more about the U.S. Federal Prison's UNICOR Industries.

LOW RECIDIVISM BUT TOUGH TIME INTEGRATING

6.(SBU) Recidivism rates are relatively low, between 10-15 percent. However, prison officials stated inmates have difficult time reintegrating into Bruneian society. For example, a Bruneian has been to prison 22 times because his fellow Bruneians, including his family, have refused to allow him "back into society." Prison Officer Zulhilmi Bakri said his office is working on addressing society's stigmatization of former convicted inmates in order for the individual to have a smoother reintegration into society. Community based programs along with a parole system that more closely monitors the inmate after his/her release is envisioned as means to assist with reintegration. Currently, inmates are simply released with no follow up services required or provided.

FUTURE PLANS

17. (SBU) The Maraburong Prison's Phase 1 facility can currently house 200 inmates at maximum capacity. The Prison's Phase 2 project; is currently under construction. Phase 3 will be completed in 2011. The goal is the ability to accommodate 1000 inmates. All inmates will be housed in the Maraburong facility once the third phase is completed. The Jerudong facility is planned to house immigration offenders. The Prison Department hopes to establish a community-based correctional facility for juvenile delinquents in the future due to the current court policy that juveniles are imposed a fine rather than sent to prison. However, the department faces an uphill battle for funding. Community based programs, in conjunction with a parole like system, is of keen interest. The Prison officers noted that they would like to visit U.S. facilities to learn more about the U.S. prison system, particularly the parole system and prison industries. Embassy would welcome Department's support in facilitating this request.

TODD